

# Arts in the Parks

## Brown County State Park Property Profile

Website: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2988.htm>

### Key message/stories: Brown County State Park

- Established in 1929, Brown County began its role as a popular Hoosier site, first as one of Indiana's Game Farm properties, then later a state park. Abandoned farm land appealed to the Dept. of Conservation's, Div. of Fish and Game personnel in the 1920s; brushy vegetation worked nicely for releasing native species that had become scarce over time, due to extensive timber removal and heavy agricultural abuse.
- In 1940, a deed transfer between DFG land and the early park, administered by the Division of Lands, Parks and Waters, then created Brown County as the largest state park in Indiana. Today, the park's young forestland continues to be a fall-color hot-spot and visual beauty to many visitors who enjoy its trademark overlooks and scenic vistas.
- Native American tribes were transients thru the rugged forestlands of southern Indiana; Delaware, Wea, and Shawnee tribes from the original Algonquin Nation in the Upper Great Lakes lived here. They splintered off to occupy the open barrens and deep forests, fishing and hunting native large game and turkey. Gardens were planted along floodplains where people lived in lodges and wigwams during warm weather and utilized caves in winter. Trade routes allowed flint, jewelry and fire arms to be used by these tribes.
- No known large encampments or battles took place here, but the park is the site of a treaty held by William Henry Harrison's army and several native tribes in the early 1800s: the 10 o'clock Treaty Line.
- Later, the Civilian Conservation Corps used this property as a resident camp for workers during the Depression years of 1931-1935. Many park facilities, roads, lakes, and trails built by the young men from the rugged Brown County backcountry slowly allowed the park to become an attractive destination for Hoosier visitors. The rustic Abe Martin Lodge, nearby Saddle Barn and shelter houses, were examples built by the young CCC crews, utilizing help from local craftsmen who taught building trades to the young men they could use later in life.
- As of June, 2015, 327 herbaceous species in flower, representing ~65 botanic families have been documented in Brown County State Park. Woody species (trees, vines, shrubs) are being collected this summer. 200+ species of birds have been recorded w/in the last 20 years with over half of them known to nest here. Young deciduous forestlands typical of the park, continue to be botanic and biologic storehouses attracting migrating birds, resident reptiles and mammals. The largest, contiguous tract of Indiana forest canopy in a 6-county area is made up of the park's 16,000 acres, with nearby Morgan-Monroe and Yellowwood state forests, the Hoosier National Forest and many youth camps. Rugged terrain and vast forested landscapes create undisturbed views of 15+ miles to the horizon. Young oak-hickory/beech-maple communities prevail.



**Top Five things To Do:**

- mountain bike on ~ 25 miles of newly-installed back-country, single track trails
- camp in 1 of 5 campgrounds
- hike the many park trails, climb the Fire Tower, scan the horizon from the park's vistas
- dine or stay in the beautiful and rustic, Abe Martin Lodge and family cabins; swim in the new Water Park!
- Nashville shopping

**Lodging:** Abe Martin Lodge and Family cabins, area hotels, bed and breakfasts, camps, etc.

**General Visitor Profile:** campers, camper families, camper groups, day visitors, local residents, scout groups for volunteer work, friends members and families, lodge guests, horsemen campers, school groups, some winter campers, winter lodge guests, reunions, wedding parties, rally campground groups, hiking clubs, mountain bikers, trail-runner groups, car clubs, Asian and Hispanic family groups, IU college groups, Indianapolis, Louisville, Cincinnati, Illinois residents, Bloomington residents, seniors, day camps, autumn motor coach tours, etc.

**Potential art venues:**

- Abe Martin Lodge back porch, back yard, amphitheater, conference rooms, etc. large park shelters
- Nature Center amphitheater, front deck.
- Friends Shelter,
- Rec Building, scenic vista
- Large playing field by Fire Tower for large orchestras, venues needing a lot of space), etc.

All buildings/shelters have power; vistas and playing fields do not. Seating capacity of all sites varies but can accommodate 100+ visitors, except nature center front deck (~30).

**Nearby communities:** Nashville, Bean Blossom, Helmsburg, Ninevah, Columbus, Bloomington, Indianapolis

Please email questions to [Artsintheparks@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:Artsintheparks@dnr.IN.gov).

